

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Proposition 50, Chapter 8 IRWM Implementation Step 1

PIN: 6804
APPLICANT NAME: University of California, Merced
PROJECT TITLE: The Sustainable Campus

FUNDS REQUESTED: \$4,730,400
COST MATCH: \$ 525,600
TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$5,256,000

DESCRIPTION: Scheduled to open to the first 1,000 students in the fall of 2005, gradually increasing its enrollment to 25,000 students. One of the major objectives of this new campus is to serve as a model of environmental stewardship. In January 2002, Chancellor Tomlinson-Keasey set the stage for environmental leadership by stating that the University should “set the standards for sustainable use of energy and other scarce resources and to be a model of development in the great San Joaquin Valley.” Consistent with the Chancellor’s statement, UC Merced is incorporating advanced water conservation measures into the design, construction and operation of its buildings. Specific water conservation and recharge techniques which UC is seeking funding for under Proposition 50 are: 1. Sustainable landscaping; 2. Dual flush toilet and waterless urinal systems; and 3. Innovative stormwater management.

Question: Consistency with Minimum IRWM Standards - This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated that the IRWM Plan meets the minimum standards.

Fail

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Adopted IRWM Plan and Proof of Formal Adoption. Weighting factor is 1.

No mention is made in the application regarding an IRWMP, nor is any schedule provided that shows such a Plan would be adopted at all. The applicant utilized an existing plan, the 2001 Merced Water Supply Plan (MWSP). The only proof of formal adoption of that plan is a statement by the applicant that the City of Merced and Merced Irrigation District (MID) adopted the 2001 MWSP and that acceptance is noted in meeting minutes. No supporting documentation was provided.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Description of Region. Weighting factor is 1.

A map is provided in the MWSP that shows the Study Area, the MID Boundary, and Urban Areas. It does not show water related infrastructure and major land-use divisions within the region as required. Approximately 10 other water districts exist within the study area but are not shown on the map. MID and the City of Merced are the primary water management agencies in Eastern Merced County and the application briefly describes their water facilities. There is no mention of other water facilities in the study area. For the purposes of the MWSP, the description of the region is good, but for the requirements of an IRWMP, the description is very poor. No information is included that describes or graphically presents infrastructure, water quality, ecological processes or environmental resources, or social and cultural components.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Objectives. Weighting factor is 1.

The applicant does not identify in Attachment 5 where components of the IRWMP requirements are found. The MWSP does, however, include well-defined objectives, listed as goals and strategies, for regional planning as they relate to existing, sustainable, and future water supplies. Five well-defined program goals that would help to address major water related issues and conflicts in the region are presented in the MWSP. The MWSP states that the goals were developed through an advisory committee that consisted of stakeholders in the City of Merced, MID, Merced County, and the applicant. Other stakeholders are listed as having participated in the MWSP development.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Water Management Strategies and Integration. Weighting factor is 1.

Within the MWSP there is no distinct presentation of water management strategies listed in the Guidelines. The applicant does not identify in Attachment 5 where strategies could be found. The application does not provide an obvious discussion of why particular strategies were or were not included. How integration of multiple strategies provided benefits is also not discussed. Attachment 5 does list the water management strategies that are essential components of an IRWMP, but these are not strategies that have been adopted by the stakeholders in the MWSP, and are not listed in the MWSP.

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Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Priorities and Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

The MWSP does not have established priorities and does not have a schedule. The MWSP does contain recommended actions and a prioritization of planning scenarios for achieving various plan goals. In Section 7 of the MWSP the "Next Steps" of the MWSP are to define the priorities based on technical and financial feasibility and to focus planning options by identifying what entities will be beneficiaries. A true course of action for the MWSP has not yet been established. Priorities only include conceptual scenarios that have been applied to computer models.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Implementation. Weighting factor is 1.

Everything contained in the MWSP is conceptual and based on modeling output, and institutional formats for implementation of the MWSP have not been established. A course of action has not been identified. The Recommended Program is included in Section 5 and lists actions such as intentional recharge, drought relief wells, various system improvements, and monetary incentives as options. There is no plan in the MWSP that discusses actual implementation of these very important ideas, no feasibility studies are included, and no timelines are presented for implementation. No responsible parties are identified to implement or maintain these potential projects.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Impacts and Regional Benefits. Weighting factor is 1.

The MWSP discusses the regional benefits of addressing water supply and quality from a true regional perspective rather than from individual efforts. Within the MWSP, there is no discussion of DACs and there is no discussion of how the MWSP would benefit DACs, as this idea was not the immediate goal of the MWSP. Based on the conclusions of the MWSP, beneficiaries of the various planning scenarios have not been identified.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Technical Analysis and Plan Performance. Weighting factor is 1.

The MWSP used several models for planning scenario evaluation. The output from the models suggests various impacts and benefits that could occur by favoring one planning scenario over another. No specific technical methods or feasibility analyses are presented that identify selection of water management strategies. Significant data gaps are acknowledged by the models. The MWSP suggests that the next steps are to establish a better plan for addressing water related goals. Because there is no definite plan, there is no discussion of methods to monitor a plan.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Data Management. Weighting factor is 1.

Other than the development of several conceptual models that are used to guide planning scenarios, there is no discussion of data management or how real data that would be generated would be disseminated to the public. No information is presented that identifies existing water quality or water supply monitoring efforts. There is no discussion of SWAMP or GAMA. The application makes the statement that the Merced River Simulation Model and Merced Area Groundwater Model provide a tool and extensive data to guide the region's water supply planning effort. That statement is only half correct, a model is a tool, but they do not provide data, they require data to be useful. There is no other discussion of actual data or monitoring efforts.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Financing. Weighting factor is 1.

The MWSP suggests that, based on the results of the planning scenarios in the MWSP that "feasible options for mechanisms of cost allocation" should be developed and "beneficiaries of implemented solutions" should be identified. There is no information in the MWSP about actual financing options.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability. Weighting factor is 1.

In the MWSP various planning documents, EIRs, and the Merced County General Plan are listed. These documents are indicated as being components of the 2001 MWSP, but no other information is provided. There is no discussion within the MWSP that accounts for how the MWSP would coordinate with other local planning agencies, projects, or studies, and the applicant does not demonstrate a method that would ensure cooperation between various agencies or how local planning documents could conflict with or benefit from the MWSP.

Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination. Weighting factor is 1.

Goal #5 of the MWSP is to "maintain consensus on water supply plan", which is a good goal, but no additional information regarding future stakeholder involvement and future stakeholder coordination is presented in the MWSP. The MWSP presents information regarding stakeholder workshops and outreach activities that were conducted prior to preparation of the 2001 MWSP. Environmental justice concerns are not discussed.

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Question: Funding Match. This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated the ability to meet the minimum funding match or has requested a waiver or reduction in the funding match. Pass or Fail.

Pass

Question: Description of Proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

The proposal includes: sustainable landscaping; dual flush toilet and waterless urinal systems; and innovative stormwater management for the campus only. The recommended program of the MWSP is to implement: recharge programs; drought relief wells; agricultural capacity and system improvements; and various economic incentive programs to provide in-lieu recharge. The MWSP, which the applicant is using as its IRWMP, does not include a recommendation to create a "sustainable campus" (i.e., this proposal). The applicant should have worked closely with MID and City of Merced to develop a proposal that included the actual recommendations of the MWSP. There are no feasibility reports, pilot projects, plans, designs or other documents that support the project. A discussion of the metrics to be used to monitor project performance could not be found in the proposal.

Question: Project Prioritization. Weighting factor is 2.

There is no information in Attachment 6 that discusses project prioritization. The proposal does not relate its presentation of proposed projects to any recommendations of the MWSP.

Question: Cost Estimate. Weighting factor is 1.

The costs for the project do not appear to be unreasonable, but details such as cost per toilet or cost for various stormwater management infrastructures are provided. Only tables with total costs are included, and no explanation is provided. The costs are broken down by direct project administration, construction/implementation, and construction administration. Funding matches are shown.

Question: Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

The schedule for implementation of the applicant's proposal is extremely basic and only outlines the schedule for construction of the major campus buildings, not the components that the applicant is actually requesting funding for within the buildings, such as toilets and stormwater and landscaping design and construction.

Question: Need. Weighting factor is 2.

The region presented in the 2001 MWSP includes a geographic area of 582,000 acres that is in significant groundwater overdraft. The region needs large-scale groundwater recharge facilities; improved water conveyance facilities to induce in-lieu groundwater recharge; and needs organized economic incentives to better manage groundwater and surface water resources to plan for the next 30 to 40 years, as well as regional conservation measures. The region needs to implement the recommendations of the MWSP. The applicant does not provide a convincing argument that it needs this grant to build its facilities. The applicant does not quantify how much water, with respect to the entire region the water conservation practices will save in the short- and long-term. No discussions of local economic, environmental, and fiscal impacts were discussed. The question of need for the project as proposed is largely unanswered.

Question: Disadvantaged Communities. Weighting factor is 2.

There is no discussion in the proposal or application or the 2001 MWSP regarding the direct benefit that the proposal would provide to DACs. The proposal would directly help the applicant, and no component of the proposal directly helps any of the 7 communities listed in Attachment 10. By installing water conservation technology, there would be an indirect benefit to the region by not utilizing additional volumes of water, but economic or environmental benefits are not identified.

Question: Program Preferences. Weighting factor is 1.

The application did not include Attachment 11.

TOTAL SCORE: DISQUALIFIED